



United States Department of Agriculture

Update 2

Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) East End Trail System Realignment George Washington and Jefferson National Forest

Since the previous update, my recreation management staff and I were invited to attend an April 14 meeting sponsored by members of the Iron Mountain Backcountry Horsemen in Carroll County. That was a great opportunity for me to learn the concerns that many equestrians feel about how parts of the early proposal would affect their use of the trails on the NRA. It also gave us the chance to explain the existing laws and regulations under which the Forest Service manages the resources on National Forest System lands, and to share information on how the project planning process works in the Forest Service.

One outcome has been my commitment to slow the decision-making process significantly, gather more information through holding public workshops and field trips, and visit many of the trails that horse riders value which may not be part of the Forest Service system. These opportunities will be open to all members of the public who have an interest in the Mount Rogers NRA trails and/or in any of the natural resources in the Area. Future updates will post times and locations for workshops and field trips.

Coming up, State Senator Carrico is holding an informational meeting at Wytheville Community College on Monday, April 27, at 7:00 pm. Forest Service staff will be present to share information on the system trail needs and proposed improvements, as well as on the natural resource problems that we are proposing to correct. Our ultimate goal is to provide a high quality, sustainable, beautiful system of trails offering a wide variety of experiences, that equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers will want to come visit and that we all can be proud of.

I encourage anyone interested in trails and related natural resources on Mount Rogers NRA to join us and share thoughts, concerns, ideas, and information to aid in developing the best solutions for managing the trails.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need information.

BETH MERZ

Area Ranger, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area



Forest Service

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